

September 21, 2001

All Poultry and Egg Suppliers

**NOTICE TO THE TRADE – SEPTEMBER 2001**

**DOMESTIC ELECTRONIC BID ENTRY SYSTEM**

Last school year, the Commodity Procurement Branch began accepting electronic bids for poultry and egg products through its Domestic Electronic Bid Entry System (DEBES). Submitting bids electronically streamlines the bid award processes thereby expediting contract award. As stated in our April 2001 Industry Meeting, bids submitted on and after October 1, 2001, for all poultry and egg products **must be transmitted electronically through the DEBES website** at <https://pcsd.usda.gov:3077/mdbc1000.exe?>.

**Offers submitted on and after October 1, 2001, by any means other than DEBES will be considered nonresponsive.**

Attached is a copy of the Poultry Programs Vendor Identification (ID) and Password Authorization, which must be completed prior to submitting bids. Only firms that DO NOT have an ID and Password must submit this form.

The software requirements are as follows:

- Browser requirement: Netscape 4.07 or above (OR) Internet Explorer 5.0 or above
- Encryption: Browser capable of handling 128-bit encryption

Using Internet Explorer, this can be found by accessing **Help/About Internet Explorer**. The display should include the line '**Cipher Strength: 128-bit**'. If it does not, download a new browser version from Microsoft at <http://www.microsoft.com>.

Using Netscape, this can be found by accessing **Help/About Communicator**. Somewhere on the screen the following will appear:

This version supports U.S. security with  
RSA Public Key Cryptography, MD2, MD5  
RC2-CBC, RC4, DES-CBC,  
DES-EDE3-CBC.

If it does not, download a new browser version from Netscape at <http://home.netscape.com/download/index.html?cp=djucc4>. Choose the Strong 128-bit Encryption version for your download.

- Proxy servers: Vendors must set up their proxy server to allow access to the above Internet production and practice ports.

Two DEBES Internet sites will be available to vendors – Practice and Production. The **Practice** site (<https://pcsd.usda.gov:3050/mdbc1000.exe?>) consists of sample invitations for vendors to become familiar with the DEBES system. The bid data entered at the Practice site will not be opened by USDA. A practice script has been prepared to help guide vendors through the process of creating, modifying, and submitting bids. The **Production** site (<https://pcsd.usda.gov:3077/mdbc1000.exe?>) will be used for bid entry for actual purchases.

Most connection problems will be the result of an improper browser version, not using 128-bit encryption, and not having the above ports accessible through your Corporate proxy server. The proxy server must be set up to allow HTTPS protocol through the appropriate port; Vendor Practice is port 3050 and Production is port 3077. The Internet Service Provider your company uses can also affect connections.

If you have already received a Vendor ID and Password, but have not successfully submitted bids through DEBES, or if you have any other questions or concerns, please contact this office on (202) 720-7693.

*Dennis J. Pearson*

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Dennis J. Pearson  
Contracting Officer

Attachment